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PP RUEHAG RUEHAST RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHDF RUEHIK RUEHLH RUEHLN RUEHLZ
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P 311043Z MAR 08
FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0524
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 3568
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 1386
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 1253
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL PRIORITY 1822
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE PRIORITY 2370
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY

UNCLAS ASHGABAT 000401

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: MFA PROTESTS IRANIAN ACCUSATION OF
HAMPERING AID

11. (U) According to press reports, the Iranian press attache in Dushanbe announced on March 26 the arrival of 28 tanker trucks of fuel oil and diesel fuel as part of a larger tranche of humanitarian aid Iran was delivering to Tajikistan, which had been sent during the winter to help the Tajiks survive the unusually harsh weather. In his statement, he also noted that because of unspecified "problems of transit" across the territories of states located between Iran and Tajikistan, the government of Iran had not been able to deliver this aid in a timely fashion. Neither Turkmenistan nor Uzbekistan, the countries of land transit that would fit this description, were specifically mentioned.

12. (U) Nevertheless, the Turkmen MFA issued a tersely worded refutation of the Iranian attache's allegations, describing his statement as "absolutely not conforming to reality." The MFA statement also described the Turkmen largesse of its own humanitarian aid to Tajikistan during the winter, and chastised Iranian diplomats for making such "groundless and biased remarks that do not conform to the high level of Turkmen-Iranian relations."

13. (SBU) COMMENT: It is likely that the Iranian trucks transporting the fuel from Iran were caught up in the scuffle and resultant sit-in protest that Iranian drivers undertook at the Turkmen border in February, after one Iranian trucker complained about truckstop facilities and was beaten by Turkmen security personnel. The MFA's disproportionate reaction is further evidence of Turkmenistan's brittleness in foreign relations. END COMMENT.
HOAGLAND